

the larvae of any of these three species in the Spring in a state of nature, and to know details of the foodplants upon which they were found, localities, etc. — G. PRIOR, 23 Manor Way, North Harrow, Middx.

CATERPILLARS FEEDING ON BUDDLEJA DAVIDII FRANCH. — Referring to Mr. Owen's note on this subject (*Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.*, 89: 344, 1977), it may be of interest to state that the attraction of this plant for Lepidoptera to oviposit on is not restricted to the British Isles, but was also observed in the Netherlands. In June 1976 one of the friars of the St. Adalbert Abbey at Egmond (prov. of North Holland) discovered a number of caterpillars of *Cucullia verbasci* (Linnaeus) on the leaves of Buddleja in the garden of the abbey, although they were also present on the *Verbascum* plant in the same garden. All caterpillars were put together and exclusively fed with Buddleja. The *Verbascum* caterpillars also accepted the plant without any hesitation.

At the end of July 1976, the same friar, who is strongly interested in Lepidoptera, saw a female of *Celastrina argiolus* (Linnaeus) which was laying eggs between the flower buds of Buddleja. Searching among the buds yielded six eggs from which the caterpillars hatched after a few days. At first they thrived well on the buds, but gradually their numbers diminished until at last two remained, of which one duly pupated and delivered a female on 1st September. The others were probably eaten by their brethren.

I may point out that the spelling of the name of the plant is incorrect in practically all articles and in many books. It is not Buddleia, but Buddleja. Cf. Linnaeus, 1753, *Species Plantarum*, ed. 1: 112. — B. J. LEMPKE, Oude IJselstraat 12 III, 1078 CH Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

ACHERONTIA ATROPOS L. (THE DEATH'S HEAD HAWK MOTH). — With reference to Dr. H. B. D. Kettlewell's interesting note in the April issue, it may be worth recording that, on 6th June last year, a specimen of this moth was found by Mr. Derrick Robinson in his garden at Burnham-on-Crouch, trapped on an apple tree grease band; I feel sure this must constitute some sort of record, although one would hardly recommend it as a means of obtaining cabinet specimens!

There was, apparently, a beehive fairly near to Mr. Robinson's garden, which might have been the primary source of attraction. Mr. Robinson had kept bees in the past and mentioned that it was not all that unusual to see specimens of *atropos* endeavouring to enter the hives in the evening. He said that under these circumstances the moths were stridulating and that the bees appeared to be distinctly soothed by this, in marked contrast to their behaviour in the event of a mouse or wasp endeavouring to enter the hive. He also mentioned that the stridulation was exactly like the sound produced by a queen bee.

I think that the answer to the question as to why the tongue of *atropos* is so different from that of other sphingids is that it is designed for piercing honeycomb. Although it is

possible to get the moth to feed on honey or diluted sugar by drawing out the tongue with a pin, a moth placed on a section of honeycomb will immediately pierce the capped cells one after another, sucking out the contents at a surprising rate. It would therefore seem that the moth's occurrence in Southern Africa and elsewhere would be linked with the necessity for an adequate supply of wild bees.

It seems probable that the specimens of *atropos* found "stung to death" in bees nests had, in actual fact, died naturally, perhaps during the winter, and, as P. B. M. Allan suggests, the bees, finding the corpses too heavy to move, would have walled them up where they lay. — A. J. DEWICK, Curry Farm, Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex.

NOTES ON THE LARVA OF *EUPITHECIA TENUIATA* HBN. (SLENDER PUG.) — On Thursday, 27th April, at a meeting of the British Entomological and Natural History Society I exhibited a number of larvae of *Eupithecia tenuiata* Hbn., feeding on the female catkins of *Salix caprea* (Goat or Pussy Willow). Almost all the literature records this larva as feeding inside the male catkins of this tree, and even Karl Deitze in his great work, *Biologie der Eupitheciën*, states that over the many years that he had collected them, he had only found them in the male catkin. Various friends of mine who have bred this moth, all confirm that they collected a large quantity of the male catkins, kept them in a container and hoped for the best and sometimes if they were lucky the moths emerged. My own experience was similar, but I found it almost impossible to prevent the catkins degenerating into a rotting mass or just drying out.

Last year at the Annual Exhibition of the B.E. & N.H.S., Mr. John Fenn of Thetford, who has kindly assisted me in my study of the Eupithecinae during the past six years, told me that earlier that year he had beaten the female tree of *S. caprea* and had obtained a number of larvae of *E. tenuiata*. I asked him if in 1978 he would again beat the female trees and confirm this, and if possible, send me some of the larvae. Some fourteen or so beautifully marked larvae in various stages duly reached me on 26th April. They were all feeding on the long open female catkin, systematically eating out the small florets of which these catkins are composed, and reminiscent of the way *E. absinthiata* eat out the florets of *Artemisia vulgaris* (Mugwort). A week after the B.E. & H.S. meeting, I met Mr. R. Dyke, who was also present at that meeting, and he told me that inspired by what I had said, he journeyed to Broxbourne Wood to beat the female willow trees and had been duly rewarded with a quantity of *tenuiata* larvae. May I therefore suggest that readers who have in the past collected the male catkins in their search for this larva, try beating the female trees. It may show this moth to be more widespread than previously believed; they may also see larvae that had previously been hidden during this stage of their life. —G. PRIOR, 23 Manor Way, North Harrow, Middx.